

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

The Story of the Trial of Ṣadr Al-Dīn Ibn Al-‘Izz Al-Ḥanafī in Damascus

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In his book *Inbā’ Al-Ghamr*, Al-Ḥāfiẓ Ibn Ḥajar said regarding the events of the year 784 AH:

‘In that year the legal proceedings against Ṣadr Al-Dīn Ibn Al-‘Izz Al-Ḥanafī took place in Damascus, and it started when the writer ‘Alī Ibn Aybak Al-Ṣafadī¹ produced a poem on the *lām qāfiyah*² according to the measure of Bānat Su‘ād and presented it to the writers and scholars and they commended it. Amongst them was Ṣadr Al-Dīn Ibn Al-‘Izz Al-Ḥanafī, who then went on to criticize some of what it contained. ‘Alī Ibn Aybak came to know of this and it offended him. [Ibn Al-‘Izz Al-Ḥanafī] went around and showed the document [containing the poem] to some scholars and most of them disavowed what he had come across. The matter spread and Ibn Aybak requested from Ibn Al-‘Izz that he return the document to him in exchange for something, but he refused. He then made the rounds with others who differed with [Ibn Aybak] and incited them against him. The matter continued to spread until it reached Egypt. Some bigots partook in spreading it until the matter reached the Sultan, and he thus wrote a long decree which included: ‘It has reached us that ‘Alī Ibn Aybak praised The Prophet, may Allah’s prayers and peace be upon him, in a poem and that ‘Alī Ibn Al-‘Izz objected to and disavowed some of what it contained, including making *tawassul* with The Prophet, may Allah’s prayers and peace be upon him, as well as depreciating his infallibility and other things, and the scholars in Egypt, especially those from his own madhab, i.e. the Ḥanafīs, have disavowed

¹ His statement: ‘Al-Ṣafadī’ is also in the original and could be a printing error. He was a Damascene poet and I have not found any link between him and Ṣafad. Ibn Ḥajr mentioned his background again in the same book and said: (‘Alī ibn Aybak Ibn ‘Abdullah Al-Taṣṣabāwī Al-Dimashqī ‘Alā’ Al-Dīn Al-Adīb. He was born in the year 728 AH and was preoccupied with literature. He also recited exquisite poetry...he gave me *ijāza* and died in the year 801 AH). He is the author of the famous *muwashshah* [tn: a postclassical form of poetry, arranged in stanzas]: (*Yā man ḥakā khaḍḍahu shaqā’iq.*)

² (tn): i.e. a rhyme scheme based on the letter *lām*

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this. He has proceeded with his request and has sought out the judges and scholars from amongst the madhabs and we are working with him in accordance with what the Law requires in term of censure and whatever else.’ The decree also included: ‘It has reached us that a group in Damascus follow the madhab of Ibn Ḥazm and Dawūd and they call to it, and they include Al-Qurashī, Ibn Al-Jā’ī, Al-Ḥusbānī and Al-Yāsūfī. Their request was put forward and it was proven against them that they did something that would necessitate being lashed, exiled or having a limb severed. Their posts were therefore taken over by others from amongst Muslim Orthodoxy.’ It also includes: ‘It has reached us that a group of Shāfi’īs, Ḥanbalīs and Mālikīs are manifesting innovation and the madhab of Ibn Taymiya, and other aspects of the Ṣāḥirī madhab that have already been mentioned. The deputy judge was summoned as well as others, and for the first time the judges, their deputies and some muftis were in attendance and the decree was read to them. What Ibn Al-‘Izz had written was brought and in it this statement of his was found: ‘Allah suffices Me. This is only said of Allah’ as well as his statement: “‘Intercede for me”, intercession is not sought from him.’ There was also his statement: ‘I have made *tawassul* with you’ and he said: ‘*Tawassul* is not to be made with him.’ His statement: ‘He is divinely protected from error’ He said: ‘Except from the error of reprimand.’ His statement: “‘O best of creation” and it is better to say this of the angels’, and other examples. He was asked and he admitted [to making the above statements]. Then he said: ‘I have gone back on that and now I believe other than what I initially stated.’ What he said was written down and the gathering dispersed. Then the rest of the scholars were summoned and they attended a second gathering, and the Judge was also there. Amongst those in attendance were: Al-Qāḍī Shams Al-Dīn Al-Ṣarkhadī, Al-Qāḍī Sharaf Al-Dīn Al-Sharīsī, Al-Qāḍī Shihāb Al-Dīn Al-Zuhrī and many others. The speech was repeated and some of them said: ‘He should be censured.’ Some others said: ‘What he said initially is enough to censure someone like him. The Ḥanbalī judge said: ‘For me, this is enough to censure someone like him’. They dispersed and were then summoned a third time, and whoever had been hesitating was also summoned, and their names were written down on a document. The Shāfi’ī judge was in attendance, as well as others who had not been in attendance before: Amīn Al-Dīn Al-Atqā, Burhān Al-Dīn Ibn Al-Ṣanhājī, Shams Al-Dīn Ibn ‘Abīd Al-Ḥanbalī as well as a group of others. They also discussed the matter, and then they dispersed and then they were summoned again. The matter intensified for those who had been hesitating so they were also in attendance, and amongst those in attendance were: Sa’d

Al-Dīn Al-Nawawī, Jamāl Al-Dīn Al-Kurdī, Sharaf Al-Dīn Al-Ghazī, Zayn Al-Dīn Ibn Rajab, Taqī Al-Dīn Ibn Muflīḥ, along with his brother, and Shihāb Al-Dīn Ibn Hajī, and they successively rebuked Ibn Al-‘Izz in more than what he had said. Then they were asked about the issue of those who had been affiliated with the Ṣāḥirī school and with Ibn Taymiya and they all responded that they only knew good about those who had been named in terms of their creed, while Ibn Muflīḥ refrained with regards to some of them. Then they came together a fifth time and they all agreed that Ibn Al-‘Izz must be censured, with the exception of the Ḥanbalī. Ibn Al-‘Izz was then asked what he had meant by what he had written. He said: ‘I only meant to exalt the Prophet, may Allah’s prayers and peace be upon him, and to obey his command not to give him more than his due.’ Thus, Al-Qāḍī Shihāb Al-Dīn Al-Zuhrī gave a fatwa that that was sufficient with regards to accepting his statement, even though he had poorly worded it, and this was written down. Ibn Al-Sharīsī gave a fatwa, along with others, that censured him, and the Shāfi‘ī judge ruled that he be imprisoned and he was thus imprisoned in Al-‘Adhrāwiya. Then he was transferred to the citadel and then he was exonerated for everything apart from being imprisoned due to the censures. The remaining judges executed it. Then a transcript was written out of what had happened, along with what the judges and scholars had written, and everything was sent to Egypt. The decree came in Dhū Al-Ḥijja to remove Ibn Al-‘Izz’s posts, and thus the teaching of *Al-‘Izziyya Al-Burāniyya* was taken over by Sharaf Al-Dīn Al-Harawī as well as *Al-Jawhariyya ‘alā Al-Qalīb Al-Akbār*. Ibn Al-‘Izz remained in detention until the month of Rabī‘ of the following year, and from that day onwards *tawassul* was made with the rank of The Prophet, may Allah’s prayers and peace be upon him, after the dawn prayer. The Shāfi‘ī judge commanded the *mu’adhinīn* to do it and they did so.

